

of the wonderful resourcefulness of the Easter Islanders, for they have weathered a storm of human and environmental disasters and have not only survived but repeatedly reinvented themselves in order to endure. "Invention" here is the glory of the Easter Islanders. If there is any "invention" it is not an imposition from without but a profound evolution from within.

In the end, beyond the factual information, the bias cannot be ignored but this does not make the book flawed, nor do I discourage anyone from buying or reading it. But make no mistake: If you place yourself in the camp that bleeds for the Easter Islanders, ancient or modern, this book preaches to the choir. If you place yourself in the camp that wants to differentiate between the past and the present and believe that there is a difference in how these are not only interpreted but manifested today (after all, the Rapanui, as Haun says, have a "right to define their past as well as their future on their own terms"), what you may get out of this book becomes a matter of being forced to question whether the same bias the author complains about is inherent because of the interpretation she brings to the discussion or because of objective effects in the real world potentially open to our inspection and thinking. Regardless of which camp the politics of this book inspires one to adhere to, it can justly be said that it continues to support an important dialogue that may eventually produce a better understanding (or perhaps a better *invention*) of Easter Island.

(Note: *Inventing 'Easter Island'* is available directly from the Easter Island Foundation for \$25 plus shipping; all proceeds benefit the EIF Scholarship Program).



### **Manu Moriori. Human and Bird Carvings on Live Kopi Trees on the Chatham Islands**

by Rhys Richards

Lavishly illustrated with drawings, black/white photographs and many color photos, soft cover, 96 pages.

Paremata Press, Wellington, NZ, 2007

ISBN 0-9582013-7-4; NZ\$45

*Review by Georgia Lee*

THE CHATHAM ISLANDS, 800km due east of Christchurch, NZ, are really off the beaten-track. Only two of its ten islands are occupied—with some 750 inhabitants. Noted for their unique bird and plant species, the islands are also the home of an unusual art form: dendroglyphs, designs carved on tree trunks.

In 1956, The Polynesian Society published *Dendroglyphs of the Chatham Islands, Moriori Designs on Karaka Trees*, by Christina Jefferson (reprinted from the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* Vol. 64). Jefferson was the first to pull together all of the then-known material about Moriori bark carvings, with most references dating to the 1800s and early 1900s. She spent years slogging around the Chathams on foot and horseback, recording the dendroglyphs and

cataloging the styles and types she encountered. A gifted artist, she drew them, measured them, and compiled statistics concerning their occurrence and attributes, etc. Her book has long been out of print. Now Richards has picked up the baton, so to speak, and his book "...written 'from Moriori, for Moriori'" invites contemporary Moriori and sympathetic others to contemplate the carvings as a meaningful part of the Moriori cultural renaissance. Many of the evocative carvings shown in *Manu Moriori* are those drawn earlier by Christina Jefferson, supplemented by recent photographs.

*Manu Moriori* is divided into sections: "The Moriori Context"; "Past Research and Study Prospects"; "Re-assessing 'Traditional' Sources and Information"; "The Knowledge of Mrs Ngaria Martin"; "Mini Rakete & George Hough"; "Birds, They Were Birds" and "Talking to Birds"; "Polynesian Beliefs"; "Squatters, Talkers and Listeners"; "Tree Carvings on Rekohu and Stone Statues, Mo'ai, on Rapanui"; "Language Comparisons" and "Comparative Studies, Time Markers and Conclusions". Part Two: "Living Trees" is a beautifully photographed color section showing the trees in their natural settings; Part Three: "Dead Trees" discusses those that were cut down and removed to museums.

The bottom line: Moriori spoke to their dead through their tree carvings (p.58), and are compared to the "living faces" of Easter Island, the *moai*, as a way of communicating with dead ancestors (p. 52). Anyone interested in the arts of Polynesia will find much here to ponder, and enjoy.

*Note: This book is available from the EIF at a reduced price, with benefits going to the Scholarship Fund.*



### **Moon Fiji, 8th edition**

by David Stanley

Moon Handbooks, Avalon Travel Publishing, Emeryville, CA 94608; 2007. Soft cover, 389 pages

ISBN 1-56691-982-7 US\$19.95

### **Moon Tahiti, 6th edition**

by David Stanley

Moon Handbooks, Avalon Travel Publishing, Emeryville, CA. 94608; 2007. Soft cover, 330 pages

ISBN 1-56691-804-9. US\$19.95

*Reviews by Georgia Lee*

THIS REVIEW IS A DOUBLE-HEADER, for two of David Stanley's Moon's Travel books have been published within months of each other. As a long-time *aficiando* of travel guides, I enjoy them whether or not I am planning a trip because I learn so much from them, and often use them as reference books about far-away places. But would I take them on a trip to Fiji or Tahiti? You bet!

David Stanley's first trip across the Pacific was in

1978 and today he is still "on the road," researching one of his favorite parts of the world. His knowledge about the various islands and island groups is astonishing, and these, his latest guides, are remarkable for their coverage of such complex areas. As one who once wrote a guide book (for tiny Rapa Nui), I find the concept of covering thousands of tiny islands to be an daunting project (for the Fiji group, some 322 islands are large enough for human habitation but only 106 of them are actually inhabited. That's a LOT of islands! And, the Tahiti book covers the Australs, Gambier, Marquesas, Society and Tuamotu archipelagos of French Polynesia – an immense area).

I'll begin with *Moon Fiji*. This book has separate sections for Nadi and the Mamanucas; Southern Viti Levu; Suva and Vicinity; Northern Viti Levu; The Yasawa Islands; the Lomaiviti Group; Vanua Levu; Taveuni; and the Lau Group and Rotuma. Right up front (a "blue section") are 12 pages of color with excellent maps and pictures to whet the appetite of any traveler. One of the 65 maps has a very user-friendly feature: a map that is color-coded by area/group, with a key to relevant page numbers, and discussions of each.

Stanley suggests a two-week visit as a minimum required to see a cross-section of Fiji (but a month would be better). With that in mind, he breaks trips down by those desiring a beach vacation, or one focusing on scuba or surfing, or hiking and biking. One is called the Best of Fiji; another is the Island-hopper Special.

In following sections, Stanley discuss specific parts of Fiji, with details about how and where to arrive, island highlights, detail maps, sites to see, places to stay and food to eat. Each section has margin tabs to help the reader sort his/her way through the various islands in this complex area. The last section, "Background" contains general information, climate, natural history, government coups, and economy, and ethnic groups. Under "Essentials" one finds information about getting there, tours, and getting around the islands, followed by Arts and Entertainment; Accommodations; "Tips for Travelers" and, finally, "Resources" which includes a Glossary, Phrasebook, Suggested Reading, Electronic contacts, and Index

*Moon Tahiti* is a 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. In 1989, the chapter on French Polynesia was spun off from Stanley's *South Pacific Handbook* (first published in 1979). Today the guide has been expanded and revamped and also has a "blue section" up front, as does *Moon Fiji*, with color photographs and essays. *Moon Tahiti* isn't just about Tahiti; it encompasses a vast area, from the Society Islands to the Marquesas; the Gambiers to the Australs and the Tuamotus. There is up-to-date information on economics, politics, food, transportation, hiking, scuba, and camping. Accommodations are described and priced and internet and email addresses are embedded in the text for ease of reference. From the best snorkeling sites to the best hamburger joints in the outer islands, it is all here. There are essays on history, famous persons, French nuclear testing, black pearls, you-name-it. Everything anyone needs to know, presented with clarity and

staggering detail. Highly recommended. For anyone headed to the Fiji Islands or anywhere in French Polynesia, a word of advice: Don't leave home without these books!!

## Rapa Nui. Aku Aku from Afar

by Helene Martinsson-Wallin.

Rapanui Press, Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert, and the Kon-Tiki Museum, 2007, US\$25  
236 pages, soft cover, illustrated

Review by Georgia Lee

THIS SMALL BOOK, 6x6 inches, is lavishly illustrated with black and white photos plus some color. The photographs are mainly of the first Heyerdahl expedition to the island, include many images of excavations and Rapanui islanders, several of whom worked with the project, plus artifacts that were collected. The publication was inspired by the 50-year jubilee exhibition at MAPSE, pictures of which are shown toward the end section of the book, and in collaboration with Olaug Andreassen. There are some great old photographs in this book, many previously unpublished. Some errors are evident: the photo caption of a picture of Gonzalo Figueroa identifies him as Claudio Cristino (p. 188), and editing by a native English speaker would have eliminated many grammatical errors. Nonetheless, this is a great little stroll down memory lane.

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